

"It is too bad that cologne won't keep sewers fresh and wholesome, and we admit on the spot that scavengers are a distinct blot on the face of municipal propriety. **DIGNIFIED EDITORIALS.** It is also to be regretted that work means sweat and war means death. But, on the other hand, experience teaches that moral suasion is a frail staff in a mob, and that two fists beat an axiom every time in a street fight."*

It is never pleasant to look upon the nasty face of corruption; it does not enhance one's feeling of respect for his profession to learn the opinion of a manufacturer that a very large percentage of physicians will write an article lauding any preparation whatever, for \$25.00 or less, or to know that a still larger percentage of "medical journals" will publish such an article when written—if the manufacturer is an advertiser or will extend his advertising patronage. It does not make one pride-swollen to look upon this sort of thing in the medical profession. It does not add to the editorial joy in living to receive a carefully prepared "write up" from some manufacturer, consign it to the waste basket, and then watch that self-same article appear in numerous "medical journals" as an original and valuable contribution to medical literature! It does not increase one's respect for his kind to see and know these things and to picture the sort of intellect and conscience possessed by the doctor who owns and edits such "medical journals" and helps in the exploitation and debauching of his own profession—who offers himself and his possessions openly for prostitution. Dishonesty, fraud, graft—these are not pleasant nor dignified attributes, nor is the contemplation of them, nor a discussion of them, what would be called "dignified." Of course not. Doubtless the house-breaker considers the illuminating ray of the patrolman's night light a most undignified thing; nay, even an impertinent, no doubt.

Let us consider the great diffusers of dignified editorials. For more than a generation the *Medical Record*, the *Medical News*, the *New York Medical Journal* and the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* have been leaders in medical journalism in this country; more recently the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and *American Medicine* have come to the front. Let us see what these have offered; what they have added to the general good of the world. The ablest men in the country have edited them or have written editorials for them; thousands on thousands of the best physicians in the land have read them regularly and have contributed to their success through the scientific material published in their pages. Their editorials have been, beyond question, dignified. Occasionally an editorial page has been sold for the laudation of some manufacturer's product; more rarely an unscrupulous manufacturer has jobbed a journal into publishing something in his favor unknown to the editor. In

the main, and along one line, they have done a wonderfully good work. But while doing it in one line, have they not undone most of the good by commercial laxness in another line? They have lowered the standard of medical ethics by promoting the use of nostrums no whit better nor worse than peruna, et al. With one tongue they have uttered learned and dignified editorials; with another tongue they have ridiculed these good words and have said "use these things which our advertisers place before you; forget your materia medica; forget your principles of ethics; follow these false gods; it is easier to use this ready-made medicine, and the ready-made medicine is really better than the pharmacist can make what you think you want; the pharmacist is a clumsy criminal and will substitute, therefore be sure that you get our stuff in the original package—never mind what it contains." Careful examination of the editorial pages of some of these journals for years back fails to disclose a single word of warning against the use of the nostrum—the remedy of unknown composition. That would be undignified; and also, it might deprive that journal of some revenue, actual or prospective, for the manufacturer would not advertise—or subsidize. The leaders have not lead right; they have not directed the steps of following physicians to the well of truth and honor, but have bended the knee before the golden calf; and the disciples have followed the example, or have strayed into other paths. Can it be considered truly dignified to pass through the world with a prayer book in one hand, and a sand bag in the other?

One of the most creditable publications in the English language is *Annals of Surgery*. With the issue for December it closed its twentieth year and marked the event by bringing out a magazine of nearly 300 pages—almost a book in itself. The *Annals* began in 1884 under the editorial control of Dr. Lewis S. Pilcher and has continued under his remarkably able guidance up to the present time. The December issue gives a most interesting editorial review of the history of the publication. The regular scientific matter is quite up to the usual high standard. Two things suggest criticism. A paper by Dr. George E. Brewer on some experiments on a method of closing wounds of the larger arteries seems, to say the least, rather premature. It is doubtful that the method will appeal to surgeons as at all desirable and it seems to be rather a waste of space to publish it. The second criticism is based upon the statement made editorially that full control of the *Annals*, including the censorship of the advertising pages, has been placed in the hands of the editor. This, in itself, is not open to criticism, but the fact that the editor does not seem to have made use of his privilege in this direction, is unfortunate. So seldom does the *Annals* present anything open to appreciable adverse criticism that we almost feel like apologizing for these few critical words.

* *The Argonaut*, January 2, 1905.